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# JOURNAL

OF THE

## ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

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ART. XIV.—*Review of the Makámát ul Harírí, by W. F. THOMPSON, Esq., Bengal Civil Service.*

*Read at General Meeting, 2nd February, 1839.*

THE Makámát of Abul Feteḥ el Harírí, in its own particular department (that of rhetorical gracefulness), is the leading classic of the Arabs. The principal merits then are those we cannot see. A language must be known in its familiar and habitual applications; its relations to all the characteristics of a people and a country, must not only be understood, but felt, pursued, and admired by foreigners, before the merits of style can be properly appreciated. We must wander with them over their deserts, watch with them beneath their skies—join in the pride of the past—the capriciousness of the present—the carelessness of the future—master every national peculiarity, and delight in each—before we can enter into the intellectual system that resulted from the whole.

To the inhabitants of adjacent countries, such as those of Europe, this interchange of feeling and situation is agreeable as a variety, rather than arduous as a study. But when the relative situations differ by nearly all the difference that earth and nature can place between them, then mental assimilation becomes a difficult, if not impracticable process. Every impression, as we first receive it, has to be divested of associations with which it has been linked from infancy, before the precise idea which rose in the writer's mind can be realized in that of the reader. We are like men who discount a foreign and suspected bill in the coin of our own country—the sums on either side may be of equal value in their respective situations, but local circumstances make each inadequate to each when carried to a distance.

The reverse of this holds good with regard to the national characteristics themselves—the substance as distinguished from the style of foreign writings. The resemblance is here not to the coin, but to

the goods, to which the distance itself gives half the value, and many a trait which a native reader would pass over unobserved, because invariable, will yield a foreigner the richest store of instruction and entertainment. The writings of remote antiquity partake of this peculiarity, and many of the (so called) matchless compositions, which are in our hands from childhood, are indebted for celebrity less to their own elevation above the average of human capacity, than to some unnoticed change in our position and habits, the aspect in which, and the medium through which, they are viewed.

In the last of those elements, these Makámát gain more, perhaps, than they lose in the first, for they incorporate the habits and spirit of a remarkable people, and that at a critical time.

It was in the reign of Mustadí, in the beginning of the fourth century (A.D. 1000), that Abul Fetch, of Bussora, composed his Makámát, a time when the Khulíphat was virtually in the hands of the Tartar guards. The social institutions that had sprung up so rapidly from rapine and bloodshed, seemed verging on decline, while the individual warmth of fanaticism that had called them forth, still raged with equal fierceness, but with more distraction among all.

Religious feeling drove them to the study of their scriptures, and, therefore, of those refined systems of reasoning, which were necessary, in order to apply them to the purposes of life, and were held essential parts of the sacred study.

The Korán was in their eyes so sacred, as a material means and monument of revelation, that the mere reverence for sanctity would be satisfied with beholding, or repeating, its words (as is now practised by Indian Mohammedans) without any acquaintance with their signification. But the moment they aimed at the spiritual part of the study, they were defeated by its very simplicity, unless they had recourse to the treatises in which the fathers of the faith had contrived to ground all, both of science and practice, on that mass of tautology and passion. Thus in the system of the Arabs, fanaticism was necessarily connected with literary attainment; and intellectual exercise with refinement, knowledge, and power. In every page of this work, we find proofs of the extent to which this universal study was carried—the influence it exercised even in the lowest orders of the state, and the consideration which its possessors enjoyed from all. The middle classes were broken up, it may be said, into so many literary coteries, which, from time to time, assembled for literary, religious, and philosophical discussion. The victor of one assembly would try his fortune in another, and

the celebrated of various cities might be convened, ostensibly for entertainment, but really to contest the palm of wit and talent with those more worthy of their powers. The spirit of vagrancy which so remarkably characterizes the literary giants of Islam, may be noticed in every Persian classic. It is originally referrible to the extent of the Khaliphat, combined with the religious obligation of pilgrimage. Once in motion, they would visit, of course, the civil as well as the religious metropolis, and try the fortune of their wits at the Khaliph's court. But a third, and in practice the most effectual, because most continual cause, was this very thirst for literary conquest. Powers might thus be developed, and comparisons drawn, to the most unexpected issues, and it was nothing surprising to see some toil-worn, haggard wayfarer, whom no one knew, enter the learned circle where the choicest intellects of a province were convened, and alternately harangue, flout, argue, and pray them into acknowledging his superiority to themselves. In the course of their peregrinations, they were of course exposed to all the uncertainties of fortune, as they usually followed their intellectual pursuits to the total disregard of all but the most urgent of worldly necessities.

Possessed of minds inexhaustibly fertile, and engrossed in the study of a religion which gave all to rhapsody, and nothing to the homely moralities of life, there was obviously a danger of their descending to loose unprincipled methods of supporting themselves, when placed at a distance from their friends and resources. The affectation of a sententiousness not always felt by them, was the necessary concomitant of so excessive an addiction to an artificial pursuit; the first step to deceit was taken, and taken to the greater peril, because, perhaps, taken unconsciously. The transition from this to graver deceptions, all equally to be palliated by the sublimity of the end, is easy to be conceived, and one who was received and courted in the city for a saint and a philosopher, might indulge himself in practising elsewhere, as an impostor and a rogue.

Imagine all these elements of character developed to the highest degree in the same person, the holiest aspirations of religion, the loftiest flights of intellect, the sweetest turns of fancy, clothing themselves in a language of inexhaustible richness and harmony; the possessor of them so conscious of his powers as to be restless without an opportunity of exerting them, yet careless, from his very pride, of exerting them in one settled direction, or to any determined scope, wandering from country to country, and city to city, without object or support besides the plenitude of his unmatched excellence, devoting his powers sometimes to the greatest, and sometimes to the

meanest of purposes ; yet never, even in these, losing sight of the dignity of their possession ; foiling the learned, baffling the great, trifling with the simple, and defrauding the humane. So unfailingly rich in his own resources, as never to apprehend want before deception, or human retribution afterwards, the reflected possessor of every man's wealth, whom he cared to circumvent ; the favoured of nature, the admired of man, the protected of heaven. Imagine all this, and you have no exaggerated picture of Abuzeid, of Serúj, the hero of Harírí's Makámát. He is conducted through fifty tales embodying different scenes, characters, and participators ; re-appearing in as many different forms at the commencement of each, glimmering through the disguise as the matchless developement of imposture proceeds, and revealed to us at the termination in all the dignity of his effrontery, the same unequalled adept in religion and in fraud.

The unity of these various incidents lies in their being put into the mouth of a narrator, one Hárís bin Hammám, himself (so it is intended) a scholar of no ordinary attainments, but of too diminutive a character to relish or understand his friend's magnanimous indifference to the rules and interests of ordinary men. This contrast between the two characters, though skilfully kept from obtrusion, is one of the most masterly touches in the composition. It affords us amusement at the same time that it brings the peculiarities of the hero into the most expressive, yet graceful relief. Possessed of the deepest admiration of his friend's powers, Hárís is constantly on the look-out for Abuzeid, yet never meets him without being tricked into paying handsomely for the gratification. When the discovery is made, which it ever is too late, Hárís remonstrates, and Abuzeid smiles, apologizes, and leaves him—but only, we feel assured, to follow what is at once his pleasure, and his profession, in some other quarter. The work thus possesses a reflective action, independent of anything that is represented, or alluded to, and yet highly conducive to our comprehension of the whole. The termination is characteristic of the person, the people, and the time. Abuzeid is represented as working on the feelings of the people of Bussora, by touching appeals to Heaven for forgiveness and grace ; intending thereby not the accomplishment of his prayer, but the disposing of his auditors to bestow their charity on so pious a personage ; when suddenly the prayer is heard, he is seen to tremble, and weep with more than the fulness of deception ; the exalted devotion which he displayed for his own advantage, had been less assumed for the purpose, than roused to its own indulgence—the breath of Heaven had breathed on him—the impostor had departed,

but the Saint remained. Abuzeid then retires to his native city of Serfij, and passes the short remnant of his days in the austere and unremitting exercise of secluded devotion.

On this retrospect, it is difficult to conceive how the author can have exhibited his hero, under circumstances of such debasement, without in any degree lowering, nay, rather, perhaps, by this very fact, augmenting the elevation of the character he depicts. It is here that the admirable skill and discrimination of the Arab are so conspicuous. Ever hovering on the verge of baseness, Abuzeid is still sustained above it, by the secret operation of a nature we feel to be superior to our own. Did he ever falter in his course, did his mind ever seem, for an instant, to admit even to itself the unworthiness of the course he was pursuing, he would be for ever lost to our affections. It is the cool, unflinching determination he maintains throughout, which extorts our esteem, because it assures us he possessed his own. Were we to meet such a mystery among the actual characters of life, we should say he sacrificed the less to the greater—his rule being the indulgence of his intellect, and his justification, its right, from matchless superiority, to be so indulged. He reminds us of some generous bird of prey, which stoops awhile from Heaven to satisfy the cravings that flesh is heir to, and then resumes his course through the sublime and inaccessible element, so peculiarly his own. From a want of due acquaintance with the whole, we are apt, in the early lectures, to be scandalized at the false familiarity with which he handles religious topics; but the defect is only in the immaturity of our perceptions—the familiarity is not false, though falsehood is its partner; the feeling he evinces is his own, supremely, undeviatingly, incessantly his own; but in the superiority of his own intellect, and the singularity of his own excellence, HE can reconcile it with actions, from which the blind prejudice of a more limited mind recoils. The deception is not in the devotion he displays, but in the moral laxity which he conceals from others and justifies to himself. The value of this delineation is something greater than we can attribute to its critical accuracy or singular character. It incorporates the spirit of the age he wrote in. It is the "beau idéal," the moral prototype, to which that structure of society would tend to assimilate its most gifted and cultivated members. Every literary character of the time would be more or less an Abuzeid, though wanting the completeness and constancy of this their too refined abstract. Neither are we to confine the resemblance to classes merely literary, not at least as such classes are regarded by ourselves. The connexion between religion and

letters, has been traced above, and it extended equally to government, law, and military avocations ; all were founded on the Korán, all experienced equal sway, and in some measure were pursued at once. Nothing more need be said to show the precarious condition of the people—their virtues betraying them to their vices, their vices flattered with the name of virtues. Their fanatic reliance on the favour and protection of Heaven, unmerited as it generally was by any real title to commendation, threw a cloak over every act of perfidy and violence, till, in their eyes, duty and indulgence became identical terms. Where everything was supposed to be actuated and directed by Heaven, the acquisition of power was interpreted as the favour of God. Success then might justify any enormities, though ever so great, by which it was brought about, and therefore enormities would always be familiar to those who expected success. What could be right, certain conditions being answered, could not be known to be wrong, till the time for proving those conditions arrived. All who hoped to win, might win by any means, and as nothing is attempted with the expectation of failure, every effort and every desire might be pursued with a safe conscience through any atrocity, till the issue either confirmed its propriety, or cut short at once the question and the offence.

The corrective to these pernicious tendencies during the first century of the faith, lay in the mighty hold of the Khaliphs on the esteem and affection of their subjects. But the fanaticism on which the whole structure depended was armed against itself—differences must always subsist among every collection of men, however disinterested, and where every one has a religious sanction to his own persuasions, and is resolved to carry out religious duty at the expense of life, a single wrong-headed bigot may disarm a state by depriving it of its head.

The successive assassinations of Osman, Omar, and Ali, the degraded character of the early Ommian Khaliphs, the subsequent wars of the two races, joined to the incessant persecution of Ali's unfortunate and sacred descendants, had shaken the popular regard, and divorced the temporal from the spiritual chief.

The Khaliphs were driven to the maintenance of foreign guards ; a step still further calculated to alienate the popular mind. From this moment the state was divided into opposite parties, the privileged minority, with the Khaliph at its head, and a dissipated majority, detesting their opponents, and through them the monarch who upheld them. The subjugation of the prince to his own adherents of course followed. Provincial governors, with little to fear, and

nothing to respect, threw off their allegiance, and the Khaliphath was first divided, and then overwhelmed by its own fragments.

One more point remains to be noticed in connexion with this remarkable work; and that, perhaps, to a Western reader, the most interesting of any. It needs but a glance at the outline to show us that our friend Don Quixote de la Mancha, so long regarded as an original, is merely the moral converse of Abuzeid of Serúj. The one as ingeniously benevolent as the other is magnanimously selfish—each the express image and abstract of the moral excesses to which his age was tending, and each following the spirit of his respective calling, through a series of peregrinations, in which he is himself the principal object. Adverting to the celebrity of the work as an Arabic classic, and the attention which Arabic literature and traditions still received in Spain, at the period when Cervantes wrote, there can be little doubt that the first faint conception of the knight and his proceedings, was caught from the text, or the renown of Haríri's Makámát, which, it may be here mentioned, is itself improved on a former publication, by Ahmed bin Hussein, of Hamadan.

The great merit of Haríri's book lying in its execution, it would be unfair to compare it with that of Cervantes, on the mere ground of the subject matter, but the resemblance of the works having been touched on, it is necessary to remark that, in this particular, Quixote is, undoubtedly, the greater performance. As his character requires still more delicacy of management than the one before us, so it is also sustained uninjured, through a far wider field of circumstance, and under far greater hazards of debasement. The pertinacity with which the Arab adheres to his principal character, to the neglect of every particular not vitally inherent in this one all-engrossing object, is a critical peculiarity of his national school, which narrowed the difficulties he had to contend with. There is, however, more of truth and nature in the holy impostor, than in the benevolent enthusiast, and therefore his character will, in general, be the most readily identified in our own bosoms. Abuzeid lives, moves, and acts before us; but in the simplest extravagance of the Knight, we always preserve a lurking consciousness, that the whole is an impracticable exaggeration; the reality of the first we never question, but the second proceeds all along on the ground of merely conventional credence. The Quixote may be the cleverest, but the Makámát is the most pleasing.

One further particular of moral resemblance will serve at once to conclude the subject and characterize the work. Under the wit



and pleasntry of Cervantes, it has been justly observed, there lurk the elements of bitterness and despair. If this is the result of disinterestedness, what is virtue? what is the world? what is man?

In Harir's Makámát, the same question meets us in a different form. If the highest flights of intellect and devotion cannot be indulged without injuring society, what is society worth?

We are here at the transcendental doctrine of human nature, its radical and incurable imperfection. To assent to this is one thing—to understand, and still more to feel it, is another. When our own spirits have once dashed their wing against this impassable barrier to aspiration, the highest point has been touched at once, of our knowledge, and our happiness; and nothing is left us but to veil the sad discovery from other men, and turn, like Abuzeid, to the service and solicitation of that Eternal Author of our being, who alone can change our despondence into fulness of joy.

The following extracts afford samples of the work.

Háris bin Hammám relates,—“I and my friends had held a meeting where none who spake was dispirited, where no spark was struck to perish, yet no heat of opposition was raised. And whilst we were disputing on the arena of criticism, and bandying the choicest quotations, behold there stood by us one, who bore on his back a coverlit, and had in his gait a limp—‘O choicest of repositories of knowledge and gladders of intelligence (thus it was he addressed us), blessings on your morning, and let the like greeting be on me. Look now upon one who was once possessed of men, and of means; of substance, and of superfluity; of fields, and of village; of friends and of tillage. Then followed the frowns of fortune, the hosts of trouble, the scathings of the invidious, the gripings of the interested, till empty was the hand, and vacant the court. The fountain dried away, the cottage vegetated, the gathering-room was tenantless, and the sleeping-room rough with stones for pillows; the estate was overturned, the children wept aloud, the mansion was deserted, and compunction visited the reviler; the speaker and the speechless gave us our due, and the envier and they that exulted in our grief, were even moved to pity: so we bowed to the time that humbled us, and the want wherewith we were chastened, walking in the path of anguish—feeding upon sorrow, filling ourselves with hunger—twisting our entrails with want—anointing our eyes with watchfulness—harbouring upon hill-sides—treading upon thorns—forgetting what saddles were—coveting the death appointed to us, and longing for the day ordained for us. Is

there then among you all, a noble heart to relieve, or a generous one to console us. For I swear by him, who brought me forth from the womb of a princess, I am verily the brother of indigence, and possess not shelter for the night.'

"Here," says Hâris bin Hammâm, "I inclined me to his necessities, and set myself forward to draw forth his periods, so holding out to him a Dinâr, I offered to bestow it on him, if he would say something poetical in its praise; on which he broke forth on the moment and without premeditation.

'Now blessings on thy yellow face that gleams so mild and clear,  
Thou wanderer of the mazy earth, delighting everywhere—  
Thou can'st to us from ages past, a relic to revere;  
And if content be hid from man, its sepulchre is here.  
Thou bring'st success, at length to bless, the toil of many a year,  
Go where thou wilt, and how thou wilt, thou canst not but be dear,  
The very ore seems stamped of hearts, with newer life to cheer,  
And he whose purse is stored with thee, has never need to fear,  
The first fresh ray may fade away, and leave a duller sphere;  
But blessings on the clouded disk, that ever shines to cheer,  
And blessings on the power and might, that lives in its career.  
How many a prince's tottering throne, has found its safeguard here—  
How many a rich one, but for this, had pined in ceaseless fear—  
How many a host of ills have fled before this gleaming spear—  
How many an orb of chastest ray, thy orb has blazed to bear—  
How many a flame that tower'd on high, and ravaged far and near,  
Thy tongue has schooled, thy touch has cooled, and bade it disappear.  
How many a captive from his friends, who vainly sighed to hear,  
Hast thou released to mirthful feast, from prison yawning drear;  
By Him on high, who rules the sky, so great thy powers appear,  
Thou almost shar'st his mighty name—a God that we revere.'

"No sooner had he finished than he stretched out his hands, saying, 'as the generous man promises, so he performs, and the cloud that thunders ought to rain.' I threw him the Dinâr, and told him to take it ungrudged, and he put it into his mouth, blessing it the while. Then having rendered his thanks, he girt himself up to depart, when I, feeling a rising inclination towards his eccentricity, so as to make extravagance disregarded, held out another Dinâr, and challenged him to win that by reviling it, on which he broke forth rapidly and unhesitatingly.

'Perish thou stale and treacherous drudge, that rendest where you light,  
Thou yellow slave, with double face, thou faithless parasite—  
A double guise is that thou wear'st, to captivate the sight,  
The lover's dull despairing look, the mistress' luring light.

What but the love of thee vile ore (say those who judge aright),  
 Induces to the crimes that brave the Maker's awful might,  
 If thou wert not, no thievish hand would feel the axe's smite.  
 No lurking vice would conscious brood, and intercept the light;  
 No miser then would start, to hear the step that glides at night;  
 No creditor would execrate the debtor's broken plight.  
 None then would pray to evade the shafts of covert spite,  
 And all the nameless, countless wrongs, in which the bad delight.  
 In straits involved who looks to thee, for aid however slight,  
 Scarce gains the single paltry boon, when thou art lost in flight.  
 Honour to him who throws thee first from some precipitous height;  
 Or when the first alluring beam has sparkled in his sight,  
 Will tell it, like the hoary sage, in vanquished passion's spite,  
 It is not well to be with thee—pass on, and so good night.'

"All I could observe was, 'how copious is your fluency!' when he exclaimed, 'but our agreement presses for accommodation;' so I gave him the other Dinár, bidding him take care to double it, on which he put it into his mouth in this way, doubling it with its fellow, and turned away proud of his morning's work, and extolling the host and his party. Here" says Hâris bin Hammâm, "my heart whispered me it was Abuzeid, and the lameness only his imposture, so I called out to him to be *upright in his ways*, or he would always be known by his colours. 'Is it Bin Hammâm?' says he, 'then welcome to my respects, and be ever honourable, as at present.' 'Yes,' I said, 'I am Hâris, and how are you, and your fortunes?' 'Oh,' he said, 'fluctuating between two conditions, of hope and fear; impelled by two winds, the stormy and the gentle.' 'But the lameness,' I said, 'why assume that? It is not for such as you to be a jester.' At this his countenance, that had lighted up, became clouded, and he turned away with these lines:—

'Twas not to be lame that I made myself lame,  
 But to knock at the portal that leads to my aim.  
 'Tis thus I entangle the camel I need,  
 And walk in the ways of the seeker of game;  
 Forgive me, ye wise ones, that carp at my guise,  
 When my fortunes *walk steadily*—I'll do the same.'

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#### EXTRACT 2nd.

Again Hâris bin Hammâm relates in another place:—

"When I crossed the desert to Zobeid, there accompanied me a boy I had brought up till he reached maturity, and instructed till

his education was complete. It was thus, that he became used to my ways, and acquainted with the tendencies of my disposition. He never overstepped my intentions nor misdirected my purposes, so that his attendance was interwoven with the chords of my heart, and whether stationary or travelling, I made him my perpetual companion and confidant. But no sooner had Zobeid closed on us than time the destroyer made away with him. So when his melody failed, and his spirit mounted, and he departed, I remained a year without relishing my food or seeking for another servant, till overcome by the inconvenience of solitude, and the vexation of my situation, I proceeded to replace my pearl, and to seek a substitute for that I had lost. So I looked in the market of Zobeid for the sellers of slaves, saying, 'I require a slave, who shall astonish on examination, and be approved on trial; one of those, whom indigence and want of subsistence have brought upon the market.' This object they all eagerly undertook, and assured me its accomplishment was easy. The moon, however, went her round, waned, and filled again, without one of their engagements being fulfilled, or any of their thunder bringing down rain. When I found the negligence of the slave-dealers, I saw it was 'not every one that lives can read' with them, and that for scratching one's own back, there was nothing like one's own finger-nail. Whereupon, leaving the course of commission, I went to the market with my gold and my silver; and whilst I was inspecting the slaves, and inquiring their prices, there met me a person muffled up to the eyes, and holding by the elbow a youth, of whom he was giving a metrical description:—

'Who buys my boy, my clever boy, that's nothing left to learn in?  
 In form and feature, see how rare—in merit how discerning.  
 Whate'er the load that blocks his road, he's always room to turn in;  
 He speaks to please, he hears to mark, whatever it's concerning.  
 He's always ready if you trip, to say, "God bless the morning;"  
 Did him in fire to toil and tire, he never heeds its burning.  
 Be to him kind, and he'll repay your patronage discerning;  
 Or bid him shift on broken thrift, there's nought you'll find him spurning.  
 His mind is rich in every lore, each effort he is stern in.  
 He never uttered ought untrue, or took a false adorning;  
 He never followed out desire, where duty urged returning;  
 Nor ever made a secret known, that once he had concern in.  
 And then, with all his excellence, in what regards his learning,  
 His prose is copious, and his rhymes, he's fumed for sweetly turning.  
 By Allah! if the wants of life would bear the least adjourning—  
 If children could be fed and clothed with nothing else but learning,  
 The wealth of kings, compared to him, were hardly worth the earning.'

"When I considered his graceful form and enchanting beauty," continues Hâris bin Hammâm, "I thought him one of the children of Paradise the happy. 'This is no human being,' I exclaimed, 'but an angel of light?' I inquired of him his name—not so much from any wish to know it, as to ascertain how far his language corresponded with his appearance, but he answered nothing, sweet or bitter, nor uttered a word, generous or ignoble; on which I slapped his face, and accused him of abominable dulness. On this he burst out into laughter, shielding himself the while, and shaking his head at me, recited these lines:

'You strike me to find out my name—it hardly suits your dealing;  
A Joseph I, if speak I must, at least in form and feeling,  
And now if aught remains concealed—'tis not of my concealing.'

"Soothed and enlivened by his poetry, I suffered my judgment to be perverted, and lost all recollection of his Joseph or my own. My only anxiety now was to conclude the purchase, and ascertain the price which I was resolved to pay. Here I expected the old man would eye me warily, and raise the price upon me; but he did not fix where I fixed, nor fasten as I anticipated. On the contrary, his words were these: 'When a slave's price is low, and his acquirements moderate, he is a Godsend to his master whose regards are thus fixed on him. Now I would rather give you the slave than reduce the price I put on him; so weigh me out, if you please, 200 dinârs, and be thankful to me as long as you live.' On this I paid him the money, with the celerity of one who seizes an article that is underpriced, not thinking of the proverb—What is underpriced is always expensive. When the bargain was concluded, and the time for separation arrived, the youth's eyes gushed out with the tears of affliction, and going up to his master he repeated these lines:

'Ah! God reprove thy wayward love—and is it me you sell,  
To still thy craving appetite, that hunger bids rebel?  
Say, is it fair, of such a pair, as we have ever been,  
That I should writhe in stripes and strokes, while you in comfort dwell?  
With dread on dread where'er I tread, to struggle as I may,  
And feel the spirit throb and thrill, that nought can wholly quell?  
Hast thou not tried me, tried me long, and weighed to every grain  
The pureness of fidelity, where falsehood cannot dwell?  
Oft have you bid me watch the snare, and sound when you returned,  
The prey you sought, entrapped and caught, by my resistless spell?  
The wasting strife that preys on life, 'twas mine to calm and soothe,  
And mine to dare forbidden paths where daring was not well:  
What words of scorn have I not borne? what obloquy defied?  
What path of pain, when thine the gain, to me the labour fell!

'Time's course has flown, and never shown the action you could blame,  
 One faulty deed, on which your eye could o'er with justice dwell.  
 Praise be to God, you never trod, throughout our mutual way,  
 The path of danger when 'twas mine that danger to foretell.  
 Yet still you coldly banish me, and throw me from your hand,  
 As artisan the useless shreds that litter round his cell.  
 Why, deign my lone and lowly way to comfort and instruct ?  
 And bring me forth, without a sigh, like some vile ware to sell,  
 Resign a youth, ah ! such a youth as none but you can tell ?'

" The sweetness of these lines was not lost on the old man. He sighed deeply, and wept like a father in the days of separation. ' This boy,' he said to me, ' I treat as my son, and distinguish him not from the scion of my own race; and but for my house being empty and my torch extinguished, he should never leave my hut till he carried me forth to the grave. You see what he suffers at leaving me, and the proverb says, The gentle dealer is ever the true believer, would you then soothe his affliction, and dissipate his grief, by agreeing to annul the sale when I require it, and not to oppose my offers when I am in a condition to make them ? We have it in our choicest traditions and most esteemed compilations,—Him who releases a reluctant man from his engagements, God will release from his transgressions.' On this," says Hâris bin Hammâm, " I gave the promise, that compunction extorted and my heart belied. The boy then approached him, and kissed him between the eyes, the tears gushing from his own as he repeated these lines :

' Since part we must, this faithful heart shall overmore adore thee,  
 And court the weight of every ill, which fate may gather o'er thee ;  
 Then go in peace, and Heaven shall speed the moments that restore thee,  
 When thou wilt hail, ah ! wilt thou not ? the eyes that still adore thee ;  
 Go, then, in peace ; where'er you go, God's blessing go before thee.'

" ' Farewell,' said the elder, ' I commit thee to him that is the best of masters ;' and with these words he gathered up his robe and turned away. For nearly a mile the boy continued his sobs and exclamations; at length, mastering his grief, and checking the tears that rolled, he said, ' Know you for whom I weep, and what it is I lament ? ' ' Doubtless,' I replied, ' it is parting with your master that occasions your tears.' ' Oh, no,' said he; ' this is a valley—there stand you, and here stand I, but you must win me before you wear me.

I weep not, God wot, for the friend that I leave,  
 It is not for vanished enjoyment I grieve ;  
 The tears on my cheek you may chance to perceive,  
 I shed for the dupe whom his eyes can deceive,

And plunge in confusion he scarce can retrieve,  
 Of wits and of money at once to bereave.  
 Out on thee, vain man ! could you fail to perceive  
 That graces like mine are not sold without leave ?

" This discourse I received for banter, and considered it a jest, till he took up the resolution of one who assumes a right, and cast off the guise of slavery as it were a slough. On this we fell into altercation that came near to blows, and brought us to the seat of litigation.

" When we explained the matter to the kazi, and quoted our respective texts, his answer was this: ' Say we not, I pray you, To caution others is to excuse one's self. To warn is to declare, and to point out is to satisfy. Now, from your own words, it is clear that this youth advised you, and you marked him not ; counselled you, and you did not attend. It were wiser, then, to cloak and conceal your foolishness, for it is yourself, and not him, you have to blame. Beware of molesting him or claiming him as a slave, for he is free and independent, not needing the support of any. It was but yesterday his father brought him here, when the sun was near to set, and recorded his acknowledgment of him as his son, whom he had nurtured, and his only heir.' ' And know you him ? ' inquired I of the kazi—' this father, whom God confound ? ' ' Is it possible,' said he, ' not to know Abuzeid, whose audacity is so determined, and of whom every kazi has stories to relate and judgments to record ? '.

" At this I was ashamed and incensed, and recovered from my delusion but too late. It was clear that his muller was a cord of his trap—a couplet of his song. My eye sunk under the burden of my wrong, and I inwardly swore never to deal with a muffled man as long as I lived. Nor did I intermit my ejaculations at the loss of my bargain, and my discredit among friends, till the kazi, observing my anger and irritation, endeavoured to console me: ' My friend,' said he, ' money is not lost which has bought you experience ; nor does that man wrong you who sharpens your perceptions. So, take warning from what has befallen you, and conceal your loss from your associates, and never forget that you have suffered in your eagerness to purchase to advantage. So, take up the feeling of one who has profited by patience, and who has derived benefit by an accession of knowledge.'

" At this I took my leave, and put on the guise of shame and sorrow, encumbered with a train of mortification and deceit. I then vowed to evince my aversion to Abuzeid, and to treat him with hostility to the end of time. So I made it my practice to avoid his

house, and to turn aside whenever I saw him ; till once on a time he came upon me suddenly in a narrow lane, and saluted me with an air of easy familiarity. I returned it by a frown, without saying a word. 'What mean you,' asked he, 'by turning up your nose at an old associate?' I asked him if he had forgot the shameless fraud he had practised on me, but he only laughed in my face, and then addressed me in these lines:

'Oh ! thou whose face is full of grace, to save us all from falling,  
And, sooth to say, whose tongue can pray with censure most appalling.  
What, sell a freeman ! Goodman cries, like any beast a stall in ?  
Good sooth restrain that righteous vein, nor torture me with brawling.  
The sires of old, who Joseph sold, were patrons of my calling,  
And now I swear by yonder sphere, in which the sun is rolling,  
And planets there with flaming hair that never dream of falling,  
While I've a piece to keep me straight you'll never find me crawling,  
So deem me better than I seem, and spare thy useless brawling.'

" 'As for my apology,' he proceeded, 'you see it is made, and as for your money, why it is spent. If, then, your indignation and horror proceed from excess of affection for your remaining cash, I ask whether you are likely to be stung twice at the same hole, or to tread on the hot coal a second time ? If, on the other hand, it is to rescue what has come to my net, that you nurture your resentment and encourage your parsimony, why you ought to weep for the weakness of your own understanding.'

"Thus it was," says Hâris bin Hammâm, "that his seductive tongue and irresistible magic compelled me to re-enter into his society, though well acquainted with his habits and character, and to cast his transgressions behind me and forget them."

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